

304 pricked in like manner. Meantime she is shut
 881 up for several days in her father's tent, and
 wrapped in a hide that she may receive no injury
 from the cold air. Carefully abstaining from
 [784] meat, fishes, and some other sorts of food, she
 [262] feeds upon nothing but a little fruit which grows
 upon brambles, and, though frequently known to
 produce ague, conduces much towards cooling
 the blood.

The long fast, together with the daily effusion
 of blood, renders the young girls extremely pale.
 The chin is not dotted like the other parts, but
 pierced with one stroke of the thorn in straight
 lines, upon which musical characters might be
 written. All thorns seem to have a poisonous
 quality, and consequently, from being scratched
 with them, the eyes, cheeks, and lips are horrid-
 ly swelled, and imbibe a deep black from the
 ashes placed on the wounded skin; so that a
 girl, upon leaving the house of that barbarous
 old woman, looks like a Stygian fury, and forces
 you involuntarily to exclaim, *Oh! quantum Niobe*
Niobe distabat ab illa! The savage parents
 [162] themselves are sometimes moved to pity at the
 [123] sight of her, but never dream of abolishing this
 cruel custom; for they think their daughters are
 ornamented by being thus mangled, and at the
 same time instructed and prepared to bear the
 304 pains of parturition in future. Though I de-

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

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CHAPTER XI.

OF THE DIVISION OF THE ABIPONIAN NATION, OF THEIR
PAUCITY, AND OF THE CHIEF CAUSES THEREOF.

To look for policy in savages will appear to you like seeking a knot in a bulrush, or expecting water from a flint. The Abipones, a nation obstinately attached to their ancient liberty, lived at their own pleasure, impatient of all controul. Their own will was their sole law. Nevertheless, as bees, ants, and every kind of animal, by natural instinct, observe certain peculiarities of their species, in like manner the most ferocious Indians pertinaciously retain, even to this day, certain customs, the ordinances of their nation, handed down to them by their ancestors, and regarded by them as laws. I shall proceed to treat of the political, economical, and military regulations of the Abipones, of their customs and magistrates.

The whole nation of the Abipones is divided into three classes: the Riikahès, who inhabit extensive plains; the Nakaigetergehes, who love the lurking-holes of the woods; and lastly, the Yaaucanigas, who were formerly a distinct nation, and used a separate language.